

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission



Arizona Violent Crime Trends, CY2002-2011 Data Brief

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona.

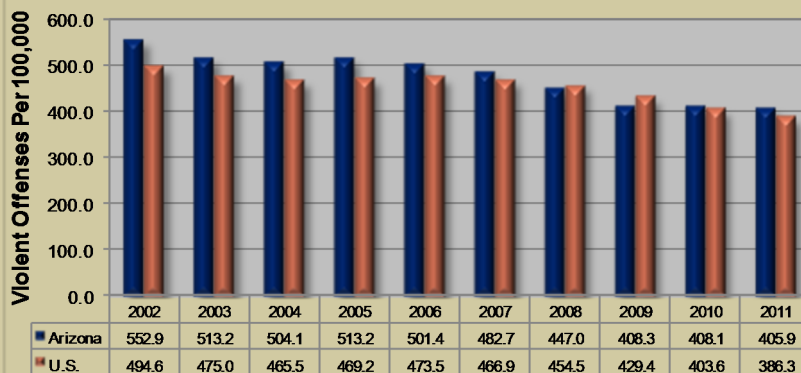
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The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program is a valuable tool for analyzing the frequency and rate of crime in Arizona and across the nation. According to the FBI, the violent crime rate, as measured by the four violent index offenses (i.e., murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault), has decreased from calendar years (CY) 2002 through 2011. This data brief looks more closely at the crime rate trends for the four violent index offenses in Arizona and the nation. The data used in this brief was submitted to the FBI's UCR program by local police agencies across Arizona and the nation and was published by the FBI in their annual UCR program reports.

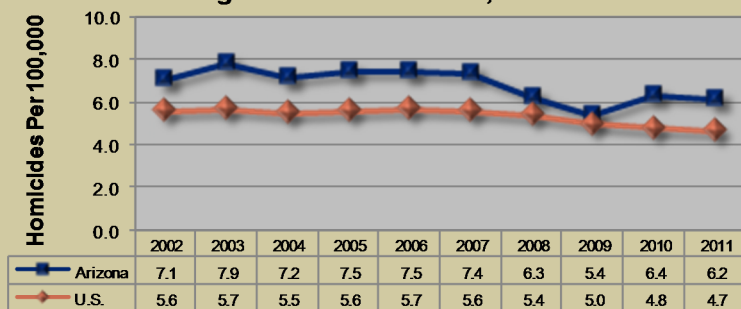
Violent Crimes Reported to Police

The violent crime rates for both Arizona and the United States decreased from CY2002 to CY2011 (Chart 1). During this time, Arizona's violent crime rate decreased by 26.6 percent from 552.9 violent offenses per 100,000 residents in CY2002 to 405.9 violent offenses reported in CY2011. Similarly, the U.S. violent crime rate fell 21.9 percent during this same time, from 494.6 per 100,000 residents in CY2002 to a ten-year low of 386.3 violent offenses per 100,000 residents in CY2011. Although Arizona's violent crime rate dropped below the U.S. violent crime rate in CY2008 and CY2009, the Arizona rate did not continue to drop at the same pace as the national rate in CY2010 and CY2011. In CY2011, the Arizona violent crime rate was 4.8 percent higher than the U.S. rate at 405.9 and 386.3, respectively.

**Chart 1. Reported Violent Index Offense Rates
CY2002-2011**



**Chart 2. Reported Murder/Non-Negligent
Manslaughter Homicide Rates, CY2002-2011**



Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter Reported to Police

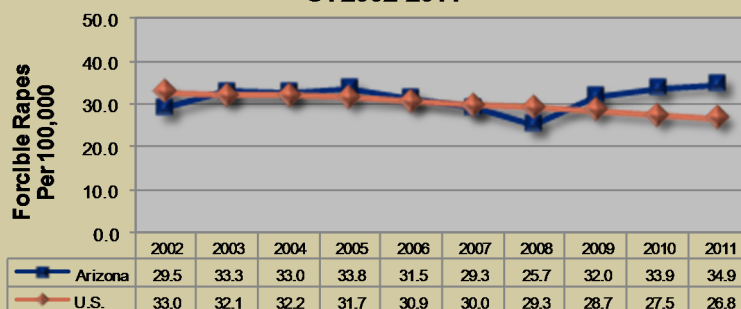
Both the state and national rates for murder and non-negligent manslaughter changed little from CY2002 through CY2007. After CY2007, Arizona and the U.S. experienced a noticeable decrease in the murder rate (Chart 2). From CY2007 to CY2011, Arizona's murder rate decreased 16.2 percent from 7.4 reported incidents per 100,000 residents in CY2007 to 6.2 in CY2011. Similarly, the nation's homicide rate decreased 16.1 percent from CY2007 to CY2011, from 5.6 per 100,000 residents to 4.7. Throughout the ten-year period examined, the rate of murder/non-negligent manslaughter was consistently higher in Arizona than in the United States as a whole.

Forcible Rape Reported to Police

Although the violent crime rate for Arizona fell from CY2002 to CY2011, the rate of forcible rapes reported to the police in Arizona increased during the same period (Chart 3). The rate of forcible rape in Arizona was 29.5 incidents per 100,000 residents in CY2002 and declined to a ten-year low of 25.7 in CY2008. After CY2008, Arizona's rate increased to a ten-year high of 34.9 reported rapes per 100,000 Arizona residents in CY2011. This rate was 18.3 percent higher than the rate in CY2002.

The U.S. forcible rape rate steadily decreased over the ten-year period from 33.0 reported incidents per 100,000 residents in CY2002 to 26.8 in CY2011.

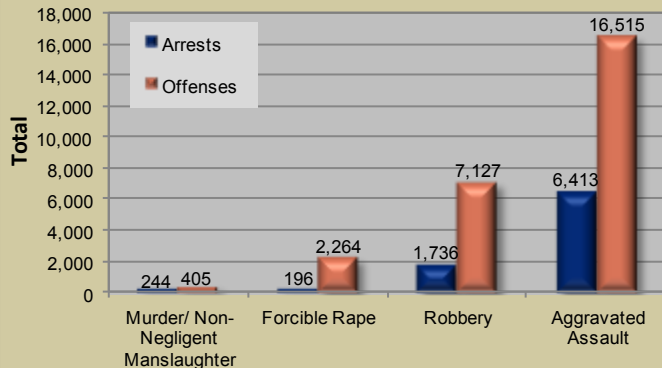
**Chart 3. Reported Forcible Rape Rates
CY2002-2011**



Arrests for Violent Crimes in Arizona

The FBI also collects arrest information from the same law enforcement agencies that submit reported offense data through the UCR program. According to arrest data reported by Arizona law enforcement agencies, a total of 8,589 arrests took place in CY2011, across the four violent index crimes (Chart 4). A total of 244 arrests were made for murder and non-negligent manslaughter, 196 arrests were made for forcible rape, 1,736 arrests were linked to robbery, and 6,413 arrests were made in incidents involving aggravated assault. The total number of violent index offenses reported in Arizona during CY2011 was 26,311.

Chart 4. Total Number of Arrests and Offenses for Violent Crimes, 2011



It is important to note that the FBI collects arrest data by arrest event, not by arrest count or individuals arrested. Therefore, it is possible that a single arrest event reported to the FBI accounts for more than one reported offense. In addition, the crimes for which an individual was arrested in CY2011 may or may not be for an offense that occurred in CY2011.

Violent Crimes Committed with a Firearm

The presence of a firearm during a crime can increase the severity of any violent incident and the likelihood of fatal consequences. In Arizona, the percentage of violent offenses committed with a firearm fell over the ten-year period across all three violent index offenses with available weapon data (Table 1). In Arizona in CY2002, murder and non-negligent homicides were committed using a firearm 75.9 percent of the time before falling to 65.5 percent by CY2011. Arizona's percentage of robberies involving the use of a firearm fell from 47.5 percent of robberies in CY2002 to 44.7 percent in CY2011 while aggravated assaults involving the use of a firearm decreased from 24.4 percent to 23.6 percent over the same period.

Table 1. Percentage of Violent Crimes¹ Committed with a Firearm, CY2002-2011

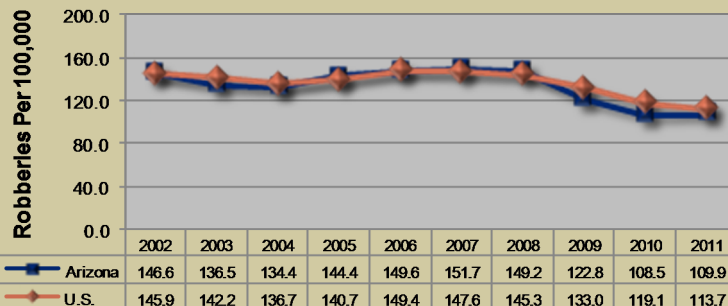
	Murder		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
	Arizona	United States	Arizona	United States	Arizona	United States
2002	75.9%	66.7%	47.5%	42.1%	24.4%	19.0%
2003	70.8%	66.9%	48.3%	41.8%	27.0%	19.1%
2004	72.1%	66.0%	50.5%	40.6%	26.6%	19.3%
2005	75.9%	68.0%	54.8%	42.1%	25.8%	21.0%
2006	74.2%	67.9%	49.3%	42.2%	29.5%	21.9%
2007	69.6%	68.0%	49.3%	42.8%	28.7%	21.4%
2008	71.6%	66.9%	51.7%	43.5%	28.5%	21.4%
2009	60.1%	67.1%	45.5%	42.6%	25.4%	20.9%
2010	65.9%	67.5%	44.2%	41.4%	23.6%	20.6%
2011	65.5%	67.7%	44.7%	41.3%	23.6%	21.2%

¹ Percentages were calculated using murders, robberies and aggravated assaults with weapon type provided to the FBI.

Robberies Reported to Police

From CY2002 to CY2011, Arizona's robbery rates closely followed the national rates (Chart 5). From CY2002 to CY2011, the Arizona robbery rate fluctuated but fell by 25.0 percent from 146.6 robberies per 100,000 residents in CY2002 to 109.9 in CY2011. Despite the nearly identical trends between the state and national rates, Arizona's robbery rate was lower than the national rate from CY2009 to CY2011.

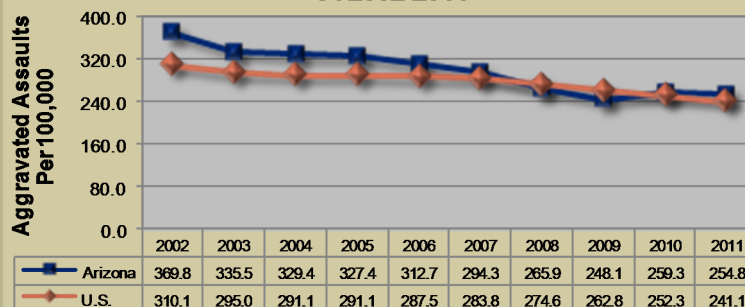
Chart 5. Reported Robbery Rates CY2002-2011



Aggravated Assaults Reported to Police

The Arizona aggravated assault rate has been declining more rapidly over the past ten years than the national rate (Chart 6). The state rate fell 31.1 percent from 369.8 in CY2002 to 254.8 in CY2011 while the U.S. rate declined 22.3 percent from 310.1 to 241.1 over the same time period.

Chart 6. Reported Aggravated Assault Rates CY2002-2011



Arizona's percentage of robberies involving the use of a firearm fell from 47.5 percent of robberies in CY2002 to 44.7 percent in CY2011 while aggravated assaults involving the use of a firearm decreased from 24.4 percent to 23.6 percent over the same period.

In contrast to Arizona's experience from CY2002 to CY2011, the national data reflect an increase in firearm use during murders and non-negligent homicides as well as aggravated assaults (Table 1).

Conclusion

The data presented in this brief reveals a continued decline in the rate of violent crime in Arizona and the U.S. based on the four UCR violent index offenses. Nonetheless, although Arizona's violent crime rate fell from CY2002 to CY2011 the rate of forcible rape increased during the latter half of the ten-year period examined and was 18.3 percent higher in CY2011 than in CY2002.

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